

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3625

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1372

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SHUM, UY, US

SUBJ: CURRENT U.S.-URUGUAYAN RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY. DURING HIS PRESENT VISIT, AMBASSADOR PEREZ CALDAS VIEWED PRESENT ATTITUDE HERE AS ONE OF DESIRING MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION AND DIALOGUE DESPITE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MODERATES AND HARDLINERS. ANOTHER SOURCE ALSO SAW HOPE FOR FORWARD MOVEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES DESPITE WEAKENING OF POSITION OF MODERATES. END SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL 1, DCM TALKED BRIEFLY WITH AMBASSADOR PEREZ CALDAS ABOUT HIS PRESENT TRIP TO MONTEVIDEO. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, PEREZ CALDAS SAID GENERAL ATTITUDE HE HAD FOUND HERE DURING HIS MOST RECENT DISCUSSIONS WAS ONE OF DESIRE TO MAINTAIN

COMMUNICATION, KEEP DIALOGUE OPEN AND IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. HE ADDED, THOUGH, THAT THERE WERE STILL PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERING VIEWS OF THE MODERATE ELEMENTS AS OPPOSED TO THOSE OF THE HARDLINERS.

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3. IN RESPONSE TO THE DCM'S EXPRESSION OF HOPE THAT THE FORMATION OF A HIGH-LEVEL COORDINATING COMMITTEE MIGHT BE BROUGHT ABOUT, THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THIS TOO WAS A HOPE THAT HE SHARED AND SAID THAT THIS ISSUE WAS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT ONE OF THE PRESENT PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO OPERATIONS OF THE SECURITY FORCES WAS THAT A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT UNITS WERE INVOLVED

AND THAT IN MANY INSTANCES IT WAS A CASE OF ONE HAND NOT KNOWING WHAT THE OTHER WAS DOING.

4. ASKED ABOUT WHAT HE SAW AS POSSIBLE STEPS TO CORRECT CERTAIN ABUSES, PEREZ CALDAS SAID HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT TWO THINGS COULD BE DONE RATHER QUICKLY ALTHOUGH HE COULD GIVE NO IMMEDIATE HOPE THAT THEY WOULD BE. FIRST, TO NOTIFY THE FAMILY PROMPTLY THAT A PERSON HAD BEEN DETAINED AND WHERE THE DETAINEE WAS BEING HELD. SECOND, TO PRACTICE "LESS SEVERE" METHODS OF INTERROGATION OF PRISONERS. DCM EXPRESSED HOPE SUCH STEPS AS THESE WOULD IN FACT BE PUT INTO EFFECT AND RECALLED THESE AND OTHER POSSIBLE MEASURES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY WITH GIAMBRUNO AND WITH PEREZ CALDAS BY AMBASSADOR. (MVD 359 AND MVD 417).

5. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN AN EMBASSY OFFICER AND AN OFFICIAL WELL CONNECTED WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, THE LATTER COMMENTED THAT WHILE THE POSITION OF THE MODERATES HERE HAD BEEN WEAKENED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING THAT OF THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT OF FEBRUARY 24, AND PROVIDING THERE IS NO FURTHER DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS, THERE IS STILL HOPE THAT A HIGH-LEVEL ACTION COMMITTEE MIGHT BE FORMED BUT NOT UNTIL THREE OR FOUR MONTHS FROM NOW. HE SAID THAT THE INTENT WOULD BE TO HAVE THE COMMITTEE LOOK INTO SPECIFIC CHARGES OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROVIDE RESPONSES, INCLUDING TO THE USG. IN ADDITION TO MILITARY ELEMENTS TENDING TOWARD THE HARDLINE HE INCLUDED CIVILIANS AS WELL, AND SPECIFICALLY AMBASSADOR ALVARO ALVAREZ OF THE FOREIGN

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MINISTRY, LUIS VARGAS OF THE PRESIDENCY, SEVERAL UNNAMED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, AND FOREIGN MINISTER ROVIRA HIMSELF. COMMENT: WHILE THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS SPOKEN WITH FIRMNESS AND AUTHORITY ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, WE ARE NOT CONVINCED HE BELONGS IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS ALVAREZ AND VARGAS.

6. THE SOURCE ALSO EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT CASES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE OF PRISONERS HAD DECLINED AND ADDED THAT A NUMBER OF MILITARY OFFICERS HAD BEEN REDUCED IN RANK AND IMPRISONED FOR TORTURE. WHEN ASKED IF HE WERE CERTAIN ABOUT THIS HE RESPONDED WITH A CATEGORICAL YES. THE EMBOFF SAID THAT UNLESS THE GOU WERE WILLING TO PROVIDE NAMES, NUMBERS, OR OTHER PRECISE INFORMATION, WHAT HE HAD JUST SAID WAS NOT DIRECTLY USEFUL TO US OR TO THE GOU. COMMENT: WHILE OTHER SOURCES HAVE CLAIMED THIS AS WELL, THE MILITARY RESPONSE IS THAT SUCH INFORMATION CANNOT BE MADE PUBLIC BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL

FOR MORALE PROBLEMS.

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Message Attributes

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